

WORDS FROM STATE NAME ABBREVIATIONS

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Almost all lists of words appearing in **Word Ways** use single letters as units to construct words. Suppose instead that we choose two-letter combinations, or bigrams, as units. Suppose that the set of bigrams we use are the fifty official state abbreviations. If we limit ourselves to words listed in boldface type and specifically indicated derived forms such as plurals in the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary, how many words can be constructed using our chosen set?

AR DE HI ID IN LA MA ME MI OH OR PA UT

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|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| AKIN | CAMS | DEAR | HILA | MAAR | MIRI | PAID | WAIN |
| ALAR | CANE | DEIL | HIND | MADE | MODE | PAIL | WAME |
| ALGA | COAL | DEME | ILKS | MAID | MOIL | PAIN | WAND |
| ALMA | COCA | DEMO | INKS | MAIL | MOLA | PANE | WANE |
| ALME | COCO | DENE | INKY | MAIN | MOME | PAPA | WANY |
| ALMS | CODE | DENY | KYAR | MAMA | MOMI | RIAL | WIDE |
| ARAK | COIL | DEVA | LADE | MANE | MONY | RIDE | WIND |
| ARCO | COIN | DEWY | LAID | MANY | MOOR | RIME | WINE |
| ARIA | COLA | FLAK | LAIN | MAUT | NEAR | RIND | WINY |
| ARID | COMA | GAGA | LAKY | MEAL | NEMA | SCAR | |
| ARIL | COME | GAIN | LAMA | MEMO | NENE | SCUT | |
| ARKS | CONE | GALA | LAME | MEND | OHIA | VAIL | |
| ARMS | CONY | GAME | LAMS | MICA | ORAL | VAIN | |
| CADE | COOK | GAMS | LAND | MIME | ORCA | VANE | |
| CAID | COWY | GANE | LANE | MIND | PACA | WADE | |
| CAME | DEAL | HIDE | LAVA | MINE | PACT | WAIL | |

| | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| ALCADE | CANDOR | DEGAME | INCONY | LAWINE | PAVANE |
| ALMOND | CODEIA | DEGAMI | INDENE | MACACO | SCALAR |
| ALPACA | CODEIN | DEMAND | INLAID | MARINE | SCILLA |
| ARCADE | CONDOR | DEMODE | INLAND | MESCAL | SCORIA |
| ARCANE | DECADE | DERIDE | INVADE | MISCUT | SCRIMS |
| CALAMI | DECANE | GAMINE | INWIND | NECTAR | VAHINE |
| CAMAIL | DECOCT | INARMS | LARINE | ORDEAL | VANDAL |
| CANDID | DECODE | INCOME | LASCAR | PAPAIN | |

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| GAMODEME | LAVALAVA | MANDARIN | MEMORIAL | SCINCOID |
| GANYMEDE | MAINLAND | MELAMINE | MOORLAND | UTILIDOR |

Having found 178 words of four or more letters, I thought it would be interesting to create a frequency distribution for the set of 50 state bigrams. It turns out that 36 of the 50 are used in forming the words. DE is the most frequent, occurring 40 times;

LA and NE are tied for second with 26 each; CO shows up 24 times; IN appears 23 times; AR, CA, MA and ME each have 20. At the other end of the scale we find AK, CT, KS, and KY with three appearances each; WY alone has two; FL, OH and OK each have but one. The fourteen which didn't get used are AZ, MD, MN, MT, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, SD, TN, TX, VT and WV. I suspect that most of these have a very low occurrence rate among all words listed in Webster's Third.

CHAMBERS BACK-WORDS FOR CROSSWORDS

This is the third in a series of specialized paperback dictionaries issued by W.& R. Chambers Ltd., 43-45 Annandale Street, Edinburgh EH7 4AZ, Scotland, joining Anagrams and Words (reviewed in the August 1985 Word Ways). Like the earlier two books, this is based on the well-known Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary. It contains 120,000 solid or hyphenated words arranged by length, and alphabetized from the end of each word. Thus, words like yucca and tibia precede blurb and conic. This type of word-listing is extremely useful for many logological investigations. Although the book is not as comprehensive as the reverse dictionary of Webster's Second compiled by the Air Force in the 1960s, it has the great advantage of being sorted by word-length.

The 384-page book is available in England for £10.95. Unfortunately, Chambers does not have a United States outlet for this book, but they are willing to supply by mail order if the buyer requests a "pro forma" invoice from them.